

Mineral Industry Surveys

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TIN IN MARCH 2005

Domestic consumption of primary tin in March was estimated by the U.S. Geological Survey to be about 1% above that of February 2005 and about 3% above that of March 2004. Estimated domestic consumption of primary tin in the first 3 months of 2005 was 4% greater than that for the comparable period of 2004.

The Platts Metals Week average composite price for tin in March was \$5.44 per pound, about 4% above that of February 2005 and about 10% above that of March 2004.

Brazilian steelmaker Cia Siderurgica Nacional SA (CSN) diversified into tin production with the purchase of tin mining and smelting company Estanho de Rondonia SA (ERSA), a subsidiary of Cesbra S.A., for \$38 million. CSN expected to use the tin from ERSA to feed its tinplate production facilities, which have a capacity of more than 1 million metric tons per year (Mt/yr), at its Volta Redonda steelworks, and to sell to the market. Following the ERSA purchase, CSN became Brazil's second leading tin producer after Grupo Paranapanema. CSN also consumes an estimated 3,600 metric tons per year (t/yr) of tin. Prior to the purchase, about 60% of the CSN's tin requirement had been supplied by ERSA (Metal Bulletin, 2005).

In Indonesia, reports indicated that small tin smelters on Bangka Island may be unable to maintain current levels of refined tin exports if global tin prices do not increase from the current \$8,000 per metric ton. Bangka has 20 independent small tin smelters that are at risk of failing owing to reduced operating margins caused by lower prices and rising production costs. One local trader estimated that there were only about seven smelters still operating, although a large new smelter was scheduled to come onstream soon (CRU Week in the News, 2005b§¹).

In Portugal, the Neves Corvo copper-tin mine was expected to produce about 330 metric tons (t) of tin-in-concentrate in 2005, 78% more than in 2004. The mine was acquired by Canada's EuroZinc Mining Corporation in 2004 (CRU Week in the News, 2005 a§).

In China, Antaike, the state nonferrous metals information division, observed that the country was experiencing a steady rise in tin imports in 2005 as the supply of domestic tin concentrate remained tight. Chinese tin smelters were importing pig tin mainly from Indonesia and Malaysia and then refining it to 99.85% tin (Platts Metals Week, 2005a).

In Germany, steel producer ThyssenKrupp AG announced that it expected to complete the 240,000-t/yr expansion of its Rasselstein tinplate operation in the third quarter of 2005. In 2004, the firm announced plans to spend \$197 million on increasing capacity at its lone tin mill at Andernach, Germany, to 1.44 Mt/yr, making it the world's leading single-plant producer of tinplate. Demand for tin mill products for beverage cans in Germany, Europe's largest beverage market, declined sharply over the past two years following the introduction of a mandatory deposit system. Company officials were optimistic, however, that an increase in tinplate demand in Eastern Europe and the CIS countries would offset the decrease in German demand. (Platts Metals Week, 2005b).

In Canada, a new firm has pursued a unique recycling niche market. Original Bottle Cap Lure Co., Quebec, formed in 2001, has collected bottle caps from bars, restaurants, and trade shows and made fishing lures from them. Most bottle caps are made from tinplate (American Metal Market, 2005).

Update

On April 29, 2005, the Platts Metals Week composite price for tin was \$5.22 per pound.

References Cited

- American Metal Market, 2005, Have cap, gone fishing: American Metal Market, v. 113, no. 13, April 4, p. 23.
- Metal Bulletin, 2005, Brazilian steelmaker CSN diversifies into tin output: Metal Bulletin, no. 8889, April 18, p. 14.
- Platts Metals Week, 2005a, China sees rising tin imports as conc supply stays tight: Platts Metals Week, v. 76, no. 18, May 2, p. 1, 6, 7.
- Platts Metals Week, 2005b, Rasselstein to complete tinplate expansion in Q3: Platts Metals Week, v. 76, no. 17, p. 5.

¹References that include a section mark (§) are found in the Internet References Cited section.

Internet References Cited

CRU Week in the News, 2005a (April 7), TIN, accessed April 7, 2005, at URL <http://www.crumonitor.com>.

CRU Week in the News, 2005b (April 14), TIN accessed April 15, 2005, at URL <http://www.crumonitor.com>.

TABLE 1
SALIENT TIN STATISTICS¹

(Metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

	2005			
	2004 ^p	February	March	January- March
Production, secondary ^{e, 2}	10,800	900	900	2,700
Consumption:				
Primary	38,500	3,220 ^r	3,260	9,680
Secondary	8,200	770	770	2,310
Imports for consumption, metal	47,600	2,870	NA	NA
Exports, metal	3,650	205	NA	NA
Stocks at end of period	6,140	5,570 ^r	5,410	XX
Prices (average cents per pound): ³				
Metals Week composite ⁴	547.30	523.08	543.81	XX
Metals Week New York dealer	409.38	394.69	408.61	XX
London, standard grade, cash	385.00	366.00	382.00	XX
Kuala Lumpur	385.11	363.94	381.19	XX

^eEstimated. ^pPreliminary. ^rRevised. NA Not available. XX Not applicable.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits, except prices.

²Includes tin recovered from alloys and tinplate. The detinning of tinplate (coated steel) yields only a small part of the total.

³Source: Platts Metals Week.

⁴The Metals Week composite price is a calculated formula, not a market price, that includes fixed and finance charges and a risk factor. It is normally substantially higher than other tin prices.

TABLE 2
METALS WEEK COMPOSITE PRICE¹

(Cents per pound)

Period	High	Low	Average
2004:			
March	549.13	459.43	495.71
April	596.03	561.93	575.65
May	624.98	575.07	592.12
June	622.44	568.24	589.38
July	583.13	565.64	576.07
August	590.50	563.04	573.74
September	585.04	566.00	576.55
October	586.56	568.98	578.10
November	584.93	570.24	580.02
December	569.06	505.64	555.57
Year	624.98	424.94	547.30
2005:			
January	521.70	492.15	503.78
February	544.11	511.92	523.08
March	555.16	521.08	543.81

¹The Metals Week composite price is a calculated formula, not a market price, that includes fixed and finance charges and a risk factor. It is normally substantially higher than other tin prices.

Source: Platts Metals Week.

TABLE 3
TINPLATE PRODUCTION AND SHIPMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES¹

(Metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Period	Tinplate waste (waste, strips, cobble, etc.) (gross weight)	Tinplate (all forms)			Shipments ²
		Gross weight	Tin content	Tin per metric ton of plate (kilograms)	
2004: ^P	W	2,550,000	7,700	3.0	2,190,000
December	W	196,000	588	3.0	198,000
2005:					
January	W	207,000	676	3.3	144,000
February	W	202,000	684	3.4	164,000
March	W	206,000	685	3.3	NA

^PPreliminary. NA Not available. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

²Source: American Iron and Steel Institute monthly publication.

TABLE 4
U.S. TIN IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION AND EXPORTS¹

(Metric tons)

Country or product	2004 ^P	2005		
		January	February	January- February
Imports:				
Metal (unwrought tin):				
Bolivia	5,060	342	544	886
Brazil	4,330	125	351	476
Chile	281	--	--	--
China	5,310	256	650	906
Indonesia	4,660	120	41	161
Japan	540	--	--	--
Malaysia	6,600	502	125	627
Peru	19,600	1,800	1,060	2,860
Switzerland	178	--	--	--
Thailand	500	--	--	--
United Kingdom	97	--	--	--
Other	472	21	100	120
Total	47,600	3,170	2,870	6,040
Other (gross weight):				
Alloys	5,180	339	353	692
Bars and rods	625	35	82	116
Foil, tubes, pipes	6	--	(2)	(2)
Plates, sheets, strip	509	12	28	41
Waste and scrap	1,950	189	120	309
Miscellaneous	3,330	273	287	561
Total	11,600	848	870	1,720
Exports (metal)	3,650	212	205	416

-- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Less than 1/2 unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5
CONSUMPTION OF TIN IN THE UNITED STATES, BY FINISHED PRODUCT¹

(Metric tons of contained tin)

Product	2005							
	2004 ^P	February			March			January- March
		Primary	Secondary	Total	Primary	Secondary	Total	
Alloys (miscellaneous) ²	2,800	103 ^r	W	103 ^r	105	W	105	315
Babbitt	264	62	W	62	22	W	22	108
Bar tin and anodes	182	25	W	25	25	W	25	76
Bronze and brass	2,490	174	133	307	174	133	307	920
Chemicals	8,490	719 ^r	W	719 ^r	719	W	719	2,160
Collapsible tubes and foil	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
Solder	12,500	708	326	1,030	789	326	1,120	3,210
Tinning	451	61	--	61	63	--	63	184
Tinplate ³	7,700	684	--	684	685	--	685	2,050
Tin powder	W	W	--	W	W	--	W	W
White metal ⁴	W	W	--	W	W	--	W	W
Other	1,000	79	11	90	82	11	92	274
Total reported	35,900	2,620 ^r	470	3,090 ^r	2,660	470	3,130	9,290
Estimated undistributed consumption ⁵	10,800	600	300	900	600	300	900	2,700
Grand total	46,700	3,220 ^r	770	3,990 ^r	3,260	770	4,030	12,000

^PPreliminary. ^rRevised. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included with "Other." -- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Includes terne metal.

³Includes secondary pig tin and tin components of tinplating chemical solutions.

⁴Includes pewter, britannia metal, and jewelers' metal.

⁵Estimated consumption of plants reporting on an annual basis.